

Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM – 2009-10 SCHOOL YEAR

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of the Title II, Part D (Enhancing Education Through Technology) competitive grant program is to provide modest financial assistance to schools with high poverty and the greatest need for technology support and/or schools identified for improvement.

TIMELINE FOR STATEWIDE MANAGED NETWORK CONSORTIUM REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL	
Application Release	July 1, 2009
Submission Deadline (Received in VT DOE)	August 7, 2009 4:00PM
Award Announcements	September 1, 2009
Project Implementation	October 1, 2009-September 30, 2010

STATEWIDE MANAGED NETWORK CONSORTIUM

The focus of this Title IID grant is to develop a Vermont based leadership group for moving forward the Statewide Managed Network concept for K-12 schools. This entity should be developed through a consortium of LEAs throughout the state and have as its mission the attraction of other LEAs and SUs to the membership of the statewide network. The leadership entity should also play an important role in developing and contracting a statewide E-rate consortium to maximize reimbursement amounts overall to schools throughout the state. The grant amount will not exceed \$100,000.

BACKGROUND

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), enacted by Congress and signed by the President on February 17, 2009, contains a number of initiatives related to advancing the availability and use of broadband infrastructure. Most specifically, the ARRA provides funding to the National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, for grants through the Broadband Telecommunications Opportunity Program (BTOP) and to the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for grants, loans, and loan guarantees for broadband infrastructure. Funding awards will be made by these agencies, and not by the State of Vermont. Other elements of the ARRA may also provide direct or indirect support for broadband infrastructure. The full text of the ARRA is available through the ESR Web site at <http://recovery.vermont.gov>.

This Request for Proposal is being crafted at a crucial time in the state of Vermont. Over the past three months, the Department of Education has been involved in discussions with the Vermont Office of Economic Stimulus and Recovery to develop a grant proposal to take advantage of the federal funds being put forth. This funding, part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), is meant to improve broadband access to all, including residential services in Vermont as well as schools. Currently, work is proceeding on a network infrastructure within the state. Stimulus funds are being sought to work on the “last mile” connections to schools and entities across the state that would be connected to this larger network. An immediate area for work on this grant will be to interest the schools that have the most ready access to the route of this network that is currently being built.

Through the work being undertaken with the entities of state government, there arises a need for an outside entity to foster the development of an initial consortium of schools that can begin to realize this concept of the K-12 managed network. At the time of this writing, the state government group has begun to draft the plan for the ARRA grant application that will most likely go out in the summer and each entity that is involved is developing plans for ways in which the system can meet the needs of all.

THE NEED:

In the process of developing the proposal for the ARRA funding, the state government group has landed on a plan to select a “program manager” to act as the grant fund administrator and coordinate activities amongst the state entities using the broadband infrastructure. This “program manager” would work directly on the behalf of all the interested parties that have access to the broadband infrastructure, i.e., higher education, residential service providers, state government, electric utility providers, and health care providers, to name a few. The K-12 community would be one of those parties and there will be significant need for an entity or individual to spearhead the coordination, development, and solicitation for members in this K-12 group.

Some tasks that will need to be accomplished in this realm include:

- Developing an initial group that would be geographically suited to take advantage of the broadband infrastructure as soon as it is completed. Phase one of this would be soliciting those schools best physically situated to connect to the fiber network now under construction in the state.
- Development of grant application to solicit an entity to coordinate E-rate funding strategies so that schools can take advantage of a statewide 470 Form submission.
- Development of financial models that would represent a commitment of schools and SUs to the project. This would include having schools commit their current funding on Internet access to this model in anticipation of more for less.
- Developing a marketing structure and plan to bring other schools and SUs to the table, as those services are available.
- Development of a grant application that can be written for a larger managing entity for the aggregation of broadband services and applications to further the appeal of the network.
- Development and oversight of a rigorous contract for this larger managing entity to continue developing services and membership for the overall K-12 network.

This grant will run for a one year period, September 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. During that time, through continual communication with the Vermont Department of Education, determinations will be made as to the continued funding (or partial funding) of this entity for a second year. It is envisioned by the Department of Education that the need for this entity will be lessened with the inclusion of a larger statewide network management partner.

ELIGIBILITY:

For purposes of this proposal, a high need LEA must be selected to receive the funding. If the LEA is not directly involved with completing the work, there must be a clear relationship, (contract, memorandum of understanding, etc.) between the LEA and the entity doing the actual work. As long as the LEA is “high need”, the work can be carried out with *any* Vermont school.

One grant award will be made to an eligible local partnership entity on behalf of eligible high-need Vermont schools, or school districts/supervisory unions (LEAs).

For purposes of this competition, a “high-need local educational agency” is an LEA that:

- Includes one or more schools with the highest numbers or percentages in the state of children from low-income families *or*
- Serves one or more schools identified for improvement or corrective action under NCLB (§1116), *or*
- Has a substantial need for assistance in acquiring and using technology.

An “eligible local partnership” is a partnership that includes at least one high-need LEA *and* at least one of the following:

- An institution of higher education that is in full compliance with the reporting requirements of section 207(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and that has not been identified by the State as low-performing under that act.
- A for-profit business or organization that develops, designs, manufactures, or produces technology products or services or has substantial expertise in the application of technology in instruction.
- A public or private nonprofit organization with demonstrated expertise in the application of educational technology in instruction.
- An individual with demonstrated expertise and capacity to lead the initiative and address expectations listed below.

REQUIREMENTS:

For an LEA to receive funding under this program:

- All schools in the LEA *must* have a current “Educational Technology Plan” approved by the Department of Education through June 30, 2009.
- Must participate in the annual “Technology Indicators Data Collection” conducted by the Department of Education.
- Must certify that all “high-needs” schools in the LEA meet requirements under the Children’s Internet Protection Act.
 - Must use a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of these funds for ongoing, sustained, intensive, high-quality professional development in integrating and using advanced technologies in instruction and in new learning environments to:
 - a. Educate regional groups on current theories and practices in education technology and the use and structure of broadband services
 - b. Build capacity in regions around current best practices in skill sets required of students in 21st Century schools with robust broadband access.
 - Private School Participation - LEAs or partnerships must engage private school officials with whom they consult for Title I purposes during the

development and implementation of competitive Title II-D programs. Therefore, for the Education Technology competitive awards, the consultation should begin during the development of the local grant proposals and, preferably, as part of the LEA consolidated application process. Expenditures for educational services and other benefits for private school children, teachers, and other educational personnel must be proportionate, taking into account the number and educational needs of the children to be served, to the expenditures for participating public school children.

GRANT PROGRAM AREA

NOTE: APPLICATIONS MUST FOLLOW THE FORMAT AND CONTENT REQUIREMENTS AS FOUND ON PAGE 7.

1. Scope of Work:

A. Purpose: The overall purpose of the grant is to solicit an entity to begin building and coordinating supervisory unions that would be eligible for membership in a statewide managed network for K-12 schools. This network would ideally serve K-12 schools with a robust minimum of bandwidth and as the network grows, deliver new and attractive services to lessen the financial burden of schools with regards Internet access. Services might include filtering services, e-mail servers, dedicated videoconference circuits and leasing programs for Internet management hardware and software. A second purpose of the grant is to develop and maintain a statewide E-rate consortium that would allow all schools to collaborate on a statewide 470 Form application. This grant would have available funding through September 30, of 2010.

B. Expectations:

- a. A crucial expectation in the first year is the development of a statewide E-rate consortium to file 470 Forms as a statewide entity. Recipient would be expected to file this 470 Form on behalf of consortium members. Grant recipient may do this work independently or contract with an E-rate consultant that can manage this area. This work must follow rigorous guidelines that are part of the Schools and Libraries Association. (SLA) Some guidance on this can be provided by Vermont Department of Education.
- b. A second crucial expectation in this first year is the development of a marketing plan to develop a committed membership from those schools currently facing the impending end of a contract with a regional ISP (one year or less on contracts). Marketing would include developing an overall plan for the model and services needed and being able to provide a calendar indicating when services will be available. This would also be the professional development piece of the grant work as 25% of grant funds must be spent on professional development.
- c. Recipient would act as an external agent for the Vermont Department of Education and its continued role as a member of the broadband stimulus package group. Representation within that effort would include advocating for K-12 school needs in the final network concept.
- d. Recipient will be responsible for formulating, and issuing a grant application for the entity that would manage the statewide network for K-12 schools. The RFP should be for a 5 year period and stipulate an implementation rollout calendar. VT DOE would assist in this process.
- e. Recipient should develop a Return on Investment strategy that will include savings that various SUs can realize by joining the consortium. This could include additional E-rate reimbursements that may be realized as well as savings that may come as a result of eliminating services that are provided through a central entity.
- f. Planning for long term beyond the scope of this grant. This may entail the dissolution of the leading entity and the assumption of responsibilities to an

entity that may apply for the overall management of the statewide network. The E-rate consortium piece **MUST** be left in place for the long term and consideration for how to sustain that should be part of the proposal.

C. Requirements for grant applicant:

- a. The grantee should be prepared to travel, meet, and disseminate information in both face to face and electronic format. This will require significant planning and time for these activities.
- b. Grantee should be well-versed in use and training of communication tools for the 21st Century including email, web management of materials, and productivity tools that relay important information to the field, i.e., spreadsheets, accounting documents, databases, etc.
- c. This grant will be utilizing American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds and will be subject to reporting and evaluation requirements that are mandated by the US Department of Education. These reporting mandates have yet to be reported to the field at the writing of this RFP. Grantee should anticipate a requirement for documentation and reporting on process and progress of the work involved in the grant. This will be communicated from the Vermont Department of Education as it becomes known.
- d. **The grant will support the following:**
 - i. Meeting spaces, food, and mileage for attendees.
 - ii. Mileage, lodging, stipends, coordinator expenses for individuals or entities involved in the work.
 - iii. Consultants and contractors for E-rate consortium development
 - iv. Professional development and training associated with informing interested parties on membership with consortium
 - v. This grant is not intended to pay for hardware or software, though some equipment could be purchased to support the work involved. Indicate the equipment and the need in the proposal.

D. Grant Amount: The maximum amount of funds for which a school, district or supervisory union may apply is not to exceed \$100,000.

E. Question and Answer Session: Interested parties may submit questions via email to Peter Drescher (peter.drescher@state.vt.us) up to July 27. These questions will then be addressed via an open telephone conference call on the morning of July 28. Notice of the conference call will be transmitted via email to those submitting questions. After July 28, the question and answer period will be closed.

F. Timeline: Award on September 1, funds available October 1, 2009 and grant expiration September 30, 2010.

Please see the “Format and Contents” section for information on how to structure the application starting on page 7.

APPLICATION FORMAT & CONTENT

Total application should be **NO MORE THAN FOURTEEN (15) PAGES**, single-spaced, font sizes 10-12. (If acronyms are used, please define them in the first instance, for example; VTDOE (Vermont Department of Education)...)

Please include a brief—one paragraph or less—ABSTRACT to begin the document.

- 1. Program Description** (no more than 6 pages) – Describe what individual or entity will do to devise a plan, develop membership, coordinate meetings, manage other grant partners, and carry through the task. **(50 Points)**
 - **Goals** – Clear articulation of the Expectations described in this RFP.
 - **Scope of Work** – Specific, bulleted list of the work to be performed and the products or outcomes of the project clearly articulated.

- 2. Capacity for Success** (no more than 2-3 pages) – This particular aspect is critical. Individuals and/or entities must be able to coordinate activities, find time to develop a comprehensive RFP and manage any outside consultant partners. Include such items as: **(20 Points)**
 - Who (describe roles, not individual names please) will be responsible for conducting the work
 - What structures and procedures are already in place or proposed that will support this project and/or enhance its sustainability
 - Evidence that this plan is realistic and that the grantee has the capacity to achieve the objectives

- 3. Evaluation** (no more than 2 page) – Upon completion of the funding cycle, there will be an evaluation required for final reporting. The evaluation will be generated by the Department of Education. As the project moves through the grant phase, describe the process for how grantee will continually evaluate the progress and process of the project. **(20 Points)**
 - The critical questions that will need to be addressed over time.
 - What mechanisms will be in place to evaluate and adjust as the project moves forward?
 - Who or what may be involved over time to collect data in order to develop some evaluative results?
 - Who within the state needs to learn about your evaluation findings and what difference the knowledge might make.

- 4. Budget Narrative (no more than 2-3 pages.): You must also complete the **SEPARATE BUDGET PAGE**.** The budget narrative should demonstrate a logical connection to the expectations described (above), and should be specific enough to give reviewers an idea of your priorities and focus for funding. The narrative should include: **(10 Points)**
 - Justification for the major expenditures proposed, especially contract payments
 - Explanation of any items on the budget sheet that might not be completely clear to a reader.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

All proposals must include an Original plus TWO (2) copies (Faxed or e-mailed applications will NOT be accepted) with:

- Proposal Cover Page with superintendent's signature
- Program Description not to exceed SIX (6) pages (see epage 6)

Application Deadline: Original plus two (2) copies of proposals must be received by the Vermont Department of Education no later than **4:00 p.m. on August 7, 2009**. Mail to:

Title II, Part D Technology Grants - c/o Peter Drescher
BROADBAND ENTITY GRANT (please be sure this is indicated)
Vermont State Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2501

Selection Process: All proposals will be read and reviewed by an independent review panel. This panel will rate the quality of the proposal (See Scoring Rubric on page 9) and the capacity of the applicant to successfully implement what has been proposed. Proposals will be scored in each of the five areas described above.

SCORING RUBRIC: ENHANCING EDUCATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Criteria	Poor	Average	Excellent
Program Description – Describe what grantee will do with the funds if received. In addition to a clear description of the activities to be undertaken, points will be assigned for: (50 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are goals around the expectations clearly articulated?</i> <i>Is there a bulleted Scope of Work that supports those goals?</i> <i>Are needs & process for identifying them clearly identified?</i> 	0 – 17	18 – 35	36 – 50
Program Description – Total Score (MAX is 50):			
Capacity for Success – Describe why this is the right kind and size of plan for your entity, and what structures are in place to support it?: (20 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Have the parties responsible for conducting the work been identified?</i> <i>Are structures, resources, policies, and procedures in place or proposed?</i> <i>Is the plan realistic? Does capacity exist to achieve objectives?</i> 	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 – 20
Capacity for Success – Total Score (MAX is 20):			
Evaluation – Describe the process you will follow to focus and possibly adjust to meet the expectations: (20 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are the primary focus areas and specific measurements identified?</i> <i>Are the participants and their roles identified?</i> <i>How will you report your findings to stakeholders in the statewide community?</i> 	0 – 6	7 – 13	14 – 20
Evaluation – Total Score (MAX is 20):			
Budget Narrative and Page – The budget should demonstrate a logical connection to the areas described above, and should be specific enough to give reviewers an idea of your priorities and focus for funding. (10 Points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is justification for major expenditures (especially salaries) reasonable?</i> <i>Explanation of items that won't be immediately obvious to someone reading your proposal for the first time</i> 	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10
Budget – Total Score (MAX is 10):			
TOTAL SCORE (MAX IS 100)			

BUDGET PAGE**Grant Area**

Broadband Entity Grant

Budget (Describe as appropriate)	TOTAL
Professional Development (25% minimum)	
Evaluation	
Salary & Wages	
Infrastructure	
Hardware	
Software	
Travel	
Consultants & Contracts	
Teacher Stipends	
Equipment	
Website development	
Other (equipment rental, printing)	
TOTAL	

- Grant proposal may further develop this budget sheet according to needs. Some areas may not be relevant to applicant proposal.
- Please use Budget Narrative page to elaborate and/or describe further.

**Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
Competitive Grant Program – 2009-10**

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

School District or SU			
Contact Person			
Phone			
Fax			
E-mail			
Grant Program Area	Broadband Entity <input type="checkbox"/>		
List all schools for which this proposal applies	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Grade Spans</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
	This is a statewide focus		(To be completed by VT DOE)
Total Funds Requested			
CIPA Certification	Superintendent has certified CIPA compliance (Check one or more): ___ on school technology plans ___ on last E-Rate application ___ on 2008 Consolidated E-Application		
Superintendent's Signature			
Date			